

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A content program distributing and returning system,  
comprising:

a first terminal executing rental of a content program;  
a second terminal that can be installed spaced from said first

terminal; and

a management apparatus connected to said first and second  
terminals through a network; wherein

said first terminal executes rental of said content program by storing  
the content program in a prescribed memory;

said second terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the  
content program stored in said prescribed memory; and

said management apparatus determines charge amount for the  
rental of said content program based on a time period from storage of the  
content program by said first terminal in said prescribed memory until said  
second terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content  
program in said prescribed memory, and controls said second terminal such  
that payment is made in accordance with the determined charge amount  
when the second terminal disables reading of said content program.

2. The content program distributing and returning system  
according to claim 1, wherein

said second terminal stores information of recommended content  
programs to the prescribed memory, when executing the process for  
disabling reading of said stored content program in said prescribed memory.

3. The content program distributing and returning system  
according to claim 2, wherein

said first terminal displays an image allowing selection of a content  
program for rental, and stores a content program selected based on the  
image displayed for selection in said prescribed memory; and

contents of said image allowing selection of a content program for rental is determined based on the information of recommended content programs stored in said prescribed memory.

4. The content program distributing and returning system according to claim 1, wherein

said first terminal stores said content program and a key necessary for reading the content program simultaneously in said prescribed memory; and

said second terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program stored in said prescribed memory by destroying said key.

5. The content program distributing and returning system according to claim 1, wherein

said management apparatus transmits a content program to said first terminal; and

said first terminal stores the content program received from said management apparatus in said prescribed memory.

6. The content program distributing and returning system according to claim 1, wherein

said second terminal executes a process for accepting rental reservation from a user, when executing the process for disabling reading of the content program stored in said prescribed memory, and transmits information of the accepted reservation to said management apparatus; and

said management apparatus adds a reward point to said user whose rental reservation is accepted by said second terminal, for the rental reservation.

7. The content program distributing and returning system according to claim 1, wherein

said second terminal accepts input of a rating by a user for the

content program of which reading is to be disabled, and transmits the rating  
5 to said management apparatus when executing the process for disabling  
reading of the content program; and

said management apparatus adds a reward point to said user for  
said input of rating.

8. A content program distributing and returning system,  
comprising:

a first terminal executing rental of a content program;

5 a second terminal that can be installed apart from said first  
terminal; and

a management apparatus connected to said first and second  
terminals through a network; wherein

said first terminal executes said rental of the content program by  
storing the content program in a prescribed memory; and

10 said second terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the  
content program stored in said prescribed memory, and stores information of  
recommended content programs in said prescribed memory when executing  
said process.

9. The content program distributing and returning system  
according to claim 8, wherein

said second terminal stores information of recommended content  
programs to the prescribed memory, when executing the process for  
5 disabling reading of said stored content program in said prescribed memory.

10. The content program distributing and returning system  
according to claim 9, wherein

said first terminal displays an image allowing selection of a content  
program for rental, and stores a content program selected based on the  
5 image displayed for selection in said prescribed memory; and

contents of said image allowing selection of a content program for  
rental is determined based on the information of recommended content

programs stored in said prescribed memory.

11. The content program distributing and returning system according to claim 8, wherein

5 said first terminal stores said content program and a key necessary for reading the content program simultaneously in said prescribed memory; and

said second terminal executes the process for disabling reading of the content program stored in said prescribed memory by destroying said key.

12. A management apparatus connected to a first terminal executing rental of a content program and a second terminal that can be installed apart from said first terminal, through a network, wherein

5 said management apparatus determines charge amount for the rental of said content program based on a time period from storage of the content program by said first terminal in said prescribed memory until said second terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the content program in said prescribed memory, and controls said second terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the determined charge amount  
10 when the second terminal disables reading of said content program.

13. A rental terminal executing rental of a content program, storing a content program in a prescribed memory, connected through a network to a returning terminal that disables reading of the content program in said prescribed memory, and further connected through a  
5 network to a management apparatus that determines charge amount of the rental of said content program based on a period from storage of the content program in said prescribed memory by said rental terminal until said returning terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the content program in said prescribed memory and controls said returning terminal  
10 such that payment is made in accordance with the charge amount determined when reading of said content program is disabled.

14. A returning terminal that can be installed apart from a rental terminal, disabling reading of a content program in a prescribed memory stored by said rental terminal, connected through a network to the rental terminal, and further connected through a network to a management apparatus that determines charge amount of the rental of said content program based on a period from storage of the content program in said prescribed memory by said rental terminal until said returning terminal executes a process for disabling reading of the content program in said prescribed memory and controls said returning terminal such that payment is made in accordance with the charge amount determined when reading of said content program is disabled.

15. A content program rental method comprising the steps of:  
storing a content program in a prescribed memory by a first terminal to execute rental of the content program;

disabling reading of the content program stored in said prescribed memory by a second terminal that can be installed apart from said first terminal;

determining charge amount of the rental of said content program, by a management apparatus connected to said first and second terminals through a network, based on a period from storage of the content program in said prescribed memory by said first terminal until reading of the content program in said prescribed memory is disabled by said second terminal; and

controlling said second terminal so that payment is made in accordance with said determined charge amount when said second terminal disables reading of said content program.

16. The content program rental method according to claim 15, wherein

in said step of executing the process for disabling reading of said content program stored in said prescribed memory, information of recommended content programs is stored in said prescribed memory.

17. The content program rental method according to claim 16,  
further comprising the steps of

displaying an image allowing selection of a content program for  
rental by/on first terminal; and

5 storing a content program selected based on the image displayed for  
selection to said prescribed memory, by said first terminal; wherein  
contents of the image allowing selection of a content program for  
rental is determined based on the information of recommended content  
program stored in said prescribed memory.

18. The content program rental method according to claim 15,  
further comprising the step of

transmitting a content program from said management apparatus to  
said first terminal; wherein

5 in said step of executing rental of said content program, said first  
terminal stores a content program received from said management  
apparatus in said prescribed memory.

19. The content program rental method according to claim 15,  
wherein

10 in said step of disabling reading of said content program, said second  
terminal further accepts rental reservation from a user, and transmits  
information of the accepted reservation to said management apparatus; and

said management apparatus adds a reward point to said user whose  
rental reservation is accepted by said second terminal, for said rental  
15 reservation.

20. The content program rental method according to claim 15,  
further comprising the steps of

accepting input of a rating by a user for the content program of  
which reading is disabled, by said second terminal;

5 transmitting said rating from said second terminal to said  
management apparatus; and

adding a reward point to said user by said management apparatus,  
for said input of rating.